The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

Weakness or Strength?

AUTHORITARIAN countries must be amazed at the spectacle American officialdom has presented in recent weeks. The MacArthur statement on Formosa and the preventive war speech of Secretary Matthews ran directly counter to State Department (and Presidential) policy. And then, when a semblance of order had been restored in those areas, the President himself had to indulge in slighting references to the U. S. Marines. That was patched up after a fashion, too.

Not only would an authoritarian not know what to make of government antics such as this, but to almost anyone they represent a degree of loose informality which could occur in no other nation in the world.

To have the leaders of our armed forces and our diplomats pulling in opposite directions is the fastest way to dissipate our energies and weaken our position in a divided world. It is folly. That it is recognized as such in official Washington is indicated by the comprehensive agreement on policy reached between the State Department and the military before the Big Three meeting.

What a contrast Truman's Washington presents to the Moscow of the Politbureau. Within the latter there are said to be real discussions. But once the line is laid down, deviation is impossible; official policy must be adhered to until it is replaced by an enunciation of a new Kremlin line (again requiring absolute adherence). This makes for iron-clad decisions, clear-cut policies, concentrated pursuit of objectives clearly envisaged.

On the other hand, what if a policy is a mistaken one? How soon can it be reviewed and supplanted when the citizen's or deputy's role is one of unquestioning loyalty and obedience? That is one reason the totalitarian folds so quickly. He seems invincible so long as he is making the right strategic moves and winning. Once he has irrevocably committed himself to a wrong tactical maneuver of a truly major sort, his downfall is all the more rapid. It is hastened by the pent-up popular resentment against the tyrannical regime.

Truman's Washington gives the impression of being more informal, slipshod and happy-go-lucky than any of its predecessors in recent times. It needs considerable tightening. It could show a far greater understanding of what is required of our government now. But over the long pull the fact that American officials can speak their minds —even appeal to the general public on matters of policy in wartime—discloses a great reservoir of strength. To err ultimately is human; to perceive the errors of others is human, too.

Teeter-Totter

ONE OF THE Manhattan radio stations has a slogan which is repeated at regular intervals throughout the day: "This is Station WNYC in New York City where eight and half million people live together in peace and harmony and enjoy the benefits of democracy." And that is true, too. New York is an amazing amalgam of nationalities, races and religions living side by side with a minimum of friction.

It would be foolish to deny that here and there in its vast, congested population there are not group tensions and ill feeling. But only rarely, as in the case of the late but surely not lamented Christian Front movement, is the poison allowed to drip into the metropolitan blood stream.

This is not to deny that differences between the large ethnic groups are present. Democracy is not a blurring of differences but a balancing of them. And in a city as large as New York balance has to be a primary political consideration.

So much can be said in favor of the New York Democrats' recent efforts to provide a slate of candidates for the fall elections which would represent the three major voting groups: Irish Catholics, Jews and Italian-Americans. In this case the Democrats managed to find an Italian Protes-

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• THIS WEEK •

Week by Week 571

Above Time, Beyond Place
by Henri de Lubac 575

The Vanishing Negro Press
by Roland E. Wolseley 578

Elisabeth Langgaesser
by Clara Menck 579

Communications 580

The Screen
by Philip T. Hartung 581

Of Note 582

A Drop or Two of Treason
by Paul V. Farrell 583

Books 585

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• NEXT WEEK •

GORDON C. ZAHN and FRANCIS J. CONNELL, C.SS.R., discuss the morality of the atomic weapon.

Mr. Zahn is of the opinion that the atom bomb and the rifle are weapons that are "essentially different." Father Connell maintains that because of the identical purpose of the weapons the moral problems pertinent to the use of the gun and the bomb "are solved by the same theological principles."

tant, thus, it was presumably felt, ingeniously getting two birds with one stone.

The limitations of such a system are evident. Looking first to a man's religious or national background, making the spelling of his name a primary consideration, leads to passing over superbly qualified men among the minority groups. Is a hopeful Norwegian Theosophist, for instance, doomed to anonymity until such a time as Norwegians or Theosophists attain a majority status? The system also gives some strength to a lamentable feeling that the office-holder is representing his own group exclusively rather than the people at large. And it puts the politico under unhealthy obligation to push the special interests of the group that elected him.

The Democrats' sweating and, literally, stewing over their slate was due, we more than suspect, to no idealism but rather to hard political pragmatism. Names like Lynch, Lehman and Pecora, they must have felt, mean votes. Apparently the party mentors believe that the only way to get the support of the majority Callaghans, Bernsteins and Morellis is to give them names like their own.

Maybe the Democrats are right. But if they are, New York is more backward politically than is generally believed. A more daring trust in the people's breadth of mind and devotion to democracy might have proved that the Democrats have seriously underestimated the growth in democratic creed in recent years.

It still remains to be seen whether group-suspicion the nation over is as primitive as, say, during Al Smith's candidacy for the White House. New York would be a good place to start to find out. Something might be proved there, as it was when Jackie Robinson put on a Dodgers' uniform.

Among the News That's Fit to Print

ERNEST HEMINGWAY has never been bashful about any of his powers. Recently he summed up his own career: "I started out very quiet and I beat Mr. Turgenev. Then I trained hard and I beat Mr. de Maupassant. I've fought two draws with Mr. Stendhal. . . . But nobody's going to get me in any ring with Mr. Tolstoy unless I'm crazy or I keep getting better."

Even Mr. Saroyan is rarely more confident. But then Mr. Saroyan hardly counts. With him it's more a question of being Armenian than being accurate.

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John O'Hara, reviewing *Across the River and Into the Trees* for the New York *Times Book Review,* goes even further than the master himself. He'll match his boy against all comers. O'Hara writes—and this ain't the half of it—"The most important author living today, the outstanding author since the death of Shakespeare. . . . The author, of course, is Ernest Hemingway, the most important, the outstanding author out of the millions of writers who have lived since 1616." That includes not only Mr. Tolstoy but a number of other heavyweight champs. But "of course," Mr. O'Hara says, "of course."

In the week that big talk like this was made, no conscientious journal should skip commenting. Yet, as so often happens with Mr. Malik, Mr. O'Hara's very sweep is dumbfounding. Where do you get the words? We've decided to settle for the latest from Hemingway himself. He sent it by cable as an answer to the critics, most of whom, to put it kindly, didn't go as far as O'Hara on *Across the River and Into the Trees.*

The Champ: "Old Hemingway Motto Quotes They Say Query What Do They Say Query Let Them Say Period Unquote. Papa." That puts it. With real class.

Border Incident

FROM THE first the United States has welcomed an investigation of the charges of the Chinese Communists that American bombers on a Korean mission had violated Manchurian territory and dropped bombs there. When it developed that bombs probably had fallen on regions now under Mao's command, as we admitted in the UN, relief was felt in certain American quarters where there had been anxiety that this was all a trumped-up charge, manufactured to embroil us militarily with the Chinese Communists. The US has agreed to make any due restitution.

Moreover, we have consistently advocated that the determination of our guilt—and, if demonstrated, its extent—be put in the hands of a UN neutral commission, which would be dispatched to the scene for that purpose. India and Sweden were mentioned as members of such a United Nations mission of inquiry. But Russia has vetoed this proposal.

The USSR seized upon the incident to make hay of another sort. Here at last was a chance to bring the Chinese Communists to the UN with some sort of official status. The Russian counterproposal was, then, was to have the UN at Lake Success get data on the alleged American guilt from the testimony of the Chinese Communists themselves. The Russian idea was to use this invitation as the first step toward full-time Chinese Communist representation in the United Nations, resulting in the displacement of the Nationalists and all the opportunities that this would provide for playing the obstructionist Russian game before the question of Chinese representation is properly taken up.

For some reason, or better a variety of individual reasons, the Russian proposal came within a whisker of adoption.

When the clearly spurious charge that the United States has invaded Formosa comes before the Security Council next, is there any assurance that the required two-thirds vote needed to permit invitation of the Chinese Communists to testify will not be realized?

The reasons alleged for the various affirmative votes are not encouraging. M. Chauvel of France declared that "common sense" demanded that the authorities which had made the complaint to the Security Council should not be barred from appearing before the Council with their evidence. Sir Gladwyn Jebb of Great Britain, mindful that the British remain in Hongkong on sufferance, held that the Chinese Communists had a right to be present to explain their case before the Security Council. Mr. Sunde of understandably fearful Norway said that such an invitation would be "natural and reasonable," considering the precedent established in the case of South Korea.

Reasons such as these would also seem to hold in the case of Formosa, even if the charge is spurious. Reasons may be found in justification for almost anything. Diplomats are better than most men in finding such justifications. It is disturbing, then, to find friends on the Security Council suddenly holding fast to the logic of isolated reason, as if such decisions at this hour could be made out of context.

Curious Sign of Progress

WHEN THE President's itinerant Commission on Migratory Labor held its sessions in Trenton, N. J., Professor Peter Odegard of the University of California put a rhetorical question. He said that employers of farm labor from all parts of this country had testified to a man that migrants from Mexico, Puerto Rico and Jamaica were more reliable and better field hands

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than local American workers. He continued, "Why is this? What has happened to the American worker? Has he really become an unstable, brawling, unreliable worker as we are told?"

One response from a Connecticut tobacco grower had it that "most American young men would work for less in industry rather than perform hand labor." That was not the way representatives of the worker himself answered the professor. Two witnesses explained how importation of migrants was causing unemployment among Negroes in many localities, while a man from the Meat and Cannery Workers Union, AFL, said that local farm workers were being displaced by the thousands by these migrants, who have no rights to be represented by a union.

Despite continuing lack of protection for our hired hands in the nation's labor laws, farm workers in the United States must be standing up for their rights, individually and collectively, as best they can. If we have reached the point where we have to go to other lands for field workers that are completely docile, that marks a certain progress.

One War, One World

LIKE KOREA, Germany has been leading a divided life the last five years, and after what has happened in the Pacific, the similarity between conditions in the two countries is not, at the moment, giving much comfort to those Western officials who are charged with planning the defense of Germany and the Continent. After World War II, neither Korea nor Germany could be put back together again because each of them, flanking Russia, became what is usually called a "power vacuum"—a strategic area the control of which was not decided in a clear-cut fashion by the war.

But there has been a significant difference in the two situations. Whereas in Korea both Russia and the US equipped and trained rival North and South armies, they refrained from doing this in Germany, the Russians being careful to disguise their East Zone forces as "police." There have been several reasons for this mutual reluctance to re-militarize Germany, but fundamentally all the reasons boil down to one: since both the US and Russia agree with Lenin's statement that whoever controls Germany controls Europe, each has been reluctant to advertise a big build-up in Germany, where the stakes are this high, because such a maneuver would certainly light the fuse of another world war. German disarmament has served as the official policy of truce in this circumstance. The truce was observed even after the Berlin blockade which, like a flash-fire, was allowed to subside without really heavy Russian or American equipment being rolled into Germany to stay.

The Russian decision to fill the power vacuum in Korea was taken, in the West, as a sign that Russia would eventually do the same thing in Germany. Our reaction has been to pledge new American troops for duty in Europe. The European reaction has been to speed up the mobilization of Europe's collective forces. All of which, logically and inevitably, leads to the great question: can Germany be defended without rearming the Germans? It is a somewhat unnerving question and the answer to it seems itself all too logical and inevitable. Committed as we are to creating "situations of strength" before negotiating with the Russians anywhere, it is quite obvious that the German situation will be an immeasurably stronger one with Germans participating in their own defense under a unified Western command.

If our military build-up in Europe is successful in deterring Russian aggression, the job of putting Germany back together will still remain to be done. It is, to say the least, difficult to see how this can ever be done, since an agreement on Germany would seem to require a compromise between the uncompromising contestants, Russia and the US.

However, in this respect, too, what is happening in Korea and what will happen there once the fighting is over, may well set a pattern and a precedent to be duplicated in Germany. If, somehow or other, Korea can be put back together as one country through the mediation of the United Nations, the effect may be to relieve the directly hostile contact and pressure of relations between the US and the USSR. The United Nations will then have become an arbitrating board negotiating a tenuous peace in those areas where conflict, in terms of power politics, now seems almost inevitable.

If, however optimistic it is to think so, this should be the ultimate result of the Korean fighting, then the war there will indeed have been like a shot heard 'round the world, affecting, as it will, the future of all international relations. And this in itself will be a rather cruel paradox for the troops in Korea, who, like all soldiers, have a hard time seeing beyond the hill they are firing into.

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Above Time, Beyond Place

Catholicism, above all, is catholic; whatever is good the Church claims for her own

By HENRI DE LUBAC

WE can beat our breasts now at the pride in our machines and in our arms that has made us so unjust towards other races, at the narrowness of an education which, claiming to furnish us with a unique human culture, has shut us off from understanding the beautiful things that man has made in other parts of the world. But the Church, which is not tarnished by our sins, is also not straitened by our artficial boundaries nor paralyzed by our prejudices. Her ambition is to gather the whole human family together, and she has nothing in common with our cheap pretensions.

As charity's ambassador she lays no claim to cultural imperialism. In spite of the intermingling of races that is taking place nowadays all over the earth she understands that civilizations are original — like human beings — and especially varied. All countries can fit themselves out with European goods. The processes of industrialism, like Western political systems, may be disseminated on all sides. But this apparent unification is no obstacle to the continued existence of certain outstanding varieties of spiritual experience, in the broadest sense of the word, which are logically irreducible. Now it is the Church's mission to purify and give fresh life to each of them, to deepen them and bring them to a successful issue by means of the supernatural revelation that she holds in deposit. The Church cannot forego this preeminently world-wide mission so as to be in the exclusive service of one or other form of civilization.

For her it is not merely a matter of justice. For she knows that, apart from the fact that no human achievement has been promised eternity, all races, all centuries, all centers of culture have something to contribute to the proper use of the divine treasure which she holds in trust: *ex toto mundo totus mundus eligitur*. A sort of treasure house "giving forth things old and new, casting the gold of fresh tributaries into her refiner's fire. . . ."

She is mindful of those providential harmonies which prepared the resources of Greece and Rome for her first expansion, and she well knows that in this conjunction of events something definitive was accomplished, yet she does not share the illusion of some of her children for whom there now remains no more to do; since the miracle of the past must continue, she believes in fresh providential harmonies for her further expansion. At periods of fearful conflict she still has hope, though it be in her humblest members, and a fresh assimilation is prepared in the silence of prayer and study. The story of a few Dominicans kidnapping Aristotle (though to some it appeared that it was Aristotle who kidnapped the Dominicans) is not an isolated case.

Moreover, the past history of the Church provides her with examples of an opposite type, and she is too painfully conscious of the impoverishment caused by the great schisms not to seek compensating factors. Why should she desire to change flexible and vigorous structural unity for a drab uniformity? Why should she wish "to make the rising sun show the colors of sunset"? As she is the only ark of salvation, within her immense nave she must give shelter to all varieties of humanity. She is the only banqueting hall, and the dishes she serves are the product of the whole of creation. She is Christ's seamless coat, but she is too—and it is the same thing—Joseph's coat of many colors. "She is the bond of indissoluble concord and perfect cohesion" and she will bind her abundant harvest into well-packed sheaves. She knows that the various customs hallowed by her "confirm the unanimity of her faith," that this visible catholicity is the normal expression of her inner riches, and that her beauty is resplendent in its variety.

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SHE is the Catholic Church: neither Latin nor Greek, but universal. Nothing authentically human, whatever its origin, can be alien to her. "The heritage of all peoples in her inalienable dowry." In her, man's desires and God's have their meeting-place, and by teaching all men their obligations she wishes at the same time to satisfy and more than satisfy the yearnings of each soul and of every age; to gather in everything for its salvation and sanctification. "Said the chapel to the meadow: 'None of your good qualities prevents your accepting my help.'"

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A *fortiori,* then, there is nothing good which Catholicism cannot claim for its own. To see in Catholicism one religion among others, one system among others, even if it be added that it is the only true religion, the only system that works, is to mistake its very nature, or at least to stop at the threshold. Catholicism is religion itself. It is the form that humanity must put on in order finally to be itself. It is the only reality which involves by its existence no opposition. It is therefore the very opposite of a "closed society." Like its Founder it is eternal and sure of itself, and the very intransigeance in matters of principle which prevents its ever being ensnared by transitory things secures for it a flexibility of infinite comprehensiveness, the very opposite of the harsh exclusiveness which characteries the sectarian spirit.

The Church is at home everywhere, and everyone should be able to feel himself at home in the Church. Thus the risen Christ, when He shows Himself to His friends, takes on the countenance of all races and each hears Him in his tongue.

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SUCH IS the Church and such is her real attitude. Nowadays it is more than ever important to make this clear, because the temptation to interpret it otherwise has become stronger, and quite a different notion of it is tending to prevail among many witnesses outside. After a period of triumphant optimism which linked the destiny of Europe to that of Christianity it has now come about that a mood of disillusion links the destiny of Christianity to that of a Europe supposedly in a decline. To the belief that the East could easily be westernized has now succeeded the opinion that any project of making it Christian is chimerical and must be abandoned.

That is a disastrous, a fatal idea, encouraged by all too many failures in the past and by all too many suggestions in the present. It is an idea which finds among us too much covert agreement, and which only a great spiritual asceticism will overcome.

The Church, trusting in the Holy Spirit that leads her, trusts also all the peoples that she comes to free. That is no sign of *naïveté* on her part. She realizes that all races are not at the same cultural level, that not all afford the same possibilities. But she knows, too, that all men are one in community of their divine origin and destiny; and that suffices to give her confidence in face of all the theories engendered by pride and egoism. It has often been said that the Church, by the Council of the Vatican and the Encyclical *Pascendi,* upheld the rights of human reason. To-day it can be said that she upholds the nobility and unity of human nature. Her motherly prudence does not prevent her from making at critical times one of those bold gestures that our cautiousness and circumspection would delay indefinitely.

Besides, does not the only efficacious way to bring out the hidden truth and to avoid extinguishing the good that would break forth lie in a systematic desire to study sympathetically those forms of thought that are most remote from us, and in this study to pay particular attention to privileged cases, however rare they may be? It is at its highest reaches that humanity must be understood; the plains—or the depressions—will always be explored soon enough.

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THE Church's method is not syncretist any more than it is naïve. Syncretism is artificial, generally the work of rulers or literary men, and presupposes declining faith. It is an insult to the living God. In the energetic language of the prophets, syncretism is fornication. In the spiritual order it is barren, like the political system or the philosophy from which it springs. It lowers and vulgarizes all the elements it combines —like the "pidgin" language of the great Mediterranean ports. But here again the history of the Church can teach us. Christianity rejected Gnosticism, a representative of the syncretist system; but such an uncompromising boldness has not hindered her in carrying out her work of assimilation with a breadth of vision that is more clearly manifest every day.

Finally it is equally unfitting to speak of liberalism, of tolerating error, or of making the salt of the Gospel savorless. For if Christianity must be shown with all its exigencies, it must also stand out in all its purity. It would be wrong to obscure the gentle severity of the Gospel, but it is not lawful either to load it with additional burdens: the first Council declared this.

And if it is once understood that the work of conversion consists, fundamentally, not in adapting supernatural truth, in bringing it down to human level, but on the contrary, in adapting man to it, raising him up to the truth that rules and judges him, we must especially beware, as of blasphemy, of confusing ourselves, its servants, with it —ourselves, our tastes, our habits, our prejudices, our passions, our narrow-mindedness and our weakness with the divine religion with which we are so little imbued. We must give souls to God, not conquer them for ourselves. If this is to be thought liberalism, it is, in any case, none other than the liberalism of charity.

The Holy Spirit Who guided the Apostle is the same Who still guides the Church, and speaks by the voice of the modern Popes. The path to which it commits us is the only safe one. To follow it is neither *naïveté,* nor syncretism, nor liberalism; it is simply Catholicism.

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The Vanishing Negro Press

As racial conflict diminishes, the Negro press can survive only if it gives up its "segregated" status

By ROLAND E. WOLSELEY

THOMAS KAREFA-SMART is a young West African who recently came to the United States to study its journalism. When he was asked about his first impressions of our Negro press he replied with no hesitation: "I noticed that only the Negro people and not the white people were seeing it. I saw that white people didn't know anything about the Negro press and weren't being influenced by it. And I think they're the ones who should know about the fight the press is making to improve the condition of the Negro in your country."

White Americans do not make observations as penetrating as that when first exposed to the Negro press. Instead they exclaim over its size or its loudness. It never occurs to them that this kind of journalism might be used to influence them.

Nor, unhappily for them, does the notion seem to enter the heads of more than two or three Negro editors and publishers. For the U. S. Negro press, like its readers, is segregated. And despite the fact that it is temporarily a bigger business than it used to be, it may be destined to remain a segregated press, eventually vanishing as its readers lose their racial identity. It is traveling in the direction of the foreign language press, which grows punier by the year. Owners of the Negro press can see what is likely to happen by noting what has taken place in Mexico, Cuba, and certain other Latin American countries where racial distinctions have been diminishing gradually and a Negro press, as such, does not exist.

The folks who dabble in statistics, like the editors of the new *Negro Handbook,* are able to track down about 300 publications. The newspapers and magazines, two-thirds being local weeklies, had a total circulation of close to three million. Twenty-seven exceeded 20,000 each.

Negro newspapers, which go in heavily for regional editions, are led in circulation by the Pittsburgh *Courier,* with 280,000 distributed over thirteen editions. The Chicago *Defender* has about 200,000. The *Afro-American* appears not only in Baltimore, its home town, but also in Philadelphia, Newark, and Richmond. The Baltimore version alone has achieved 125,000.

Some of these Negro publications also *look* like big-time journalism. *Ebony,* a monthly much like *Life,* and *Our World,* the latter a Negro imitation of *Look,* often have sixty pages, with two-color covers. The top weekly newspapers, like the New York *Amsterdam News,* Chicago *Defender,* Norfolk *Journal and Guide,* and Pittsburgh *Courier,* usually have from 20 to 32 pages. And since they do not have 60 or 70 per cent of their space sold to advertisers as do their white contemporaries, but are popping with pictures, news stories, features, and personal columns, their customers get plenty to read for their seven, ten, and fifteen cents.

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MOST SENSATIONAL of the success stories is that *Ebony,* whose Chicago publishers last year moved into a Hollywood version of a publishing plant from which that picture monthly as well as the pocket-size *Negro Digest* is issued. Its publisher, an Arkansan named John H. Johnson, entered journalism unglamorously by editing an insurance firm's house publication. Courses in journalism encouraged him to establish *Negro Digest* in 1942, when he was twenty-five and had observed the popularity of the digest and pocket-periodicals. Articles by Edward G. Robinson, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Eric Johnston, in a series called "If I Were a Negro," brought his magazine national attention. The *Digest's* profits enabled him in 1945 to undertake *Ebony.*

Johnson resented the white publication practice of incessantly portraying the Negro as some sort of freak, habitual criminal, or other second-class citizen. *Ebony,* he decided, should show the Negro as a normal person, with most of the interests of white people. In three years it passed the quarter of a million mark and this year was printing 400,000 copies. The parent magazine, *Negro Digest,* hovers around 100,000. Both are owned and produced almost entirely by Negroes, but the firm declares that inclusion of about 10 per cent white personnel, several as top brass, is in the interest of democracy. *Ebony's* dignity, while it may not be too evident to white readers of comparable magazines less given to racial con-

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sciousness, is in contrast to the attitude of its rivals. *Color* and *Our World,* and the leading Negro newspapers.

The papers of Philadelphia, Chicago, New York, Kansas City, Baltimore, and other cities with substantial Negro populations, however, are typical only of the Mr. Bigs of this special press. More than a hundred little weeklies struggle along with circulations well below one thousand and not often more than ten thousand.

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THE circulation and advertising managers of Negro publications, less inclined to day-dreaming than publishers and editors, know that their saturation points are quickly reached. The Negro population is approximately fifteen million. The Negro illiteracy is small by comparison with the rate for the total populations of numerous other countries, now standing at eleven per cent among persons aged fourteen or over.

But it takes more than millions of potential readers to provide sufficient circulation and advertising to finance Negro publications. Dr. Vishnu V. Oak, analyst of Negro business, points to two main reasons why Negro newspapers cannot expect as much revenue from advertising as do white publications. Until recently papers have relied mainly upon the patronage of business establishments in Negro neighborhoods. Such firms are not affluent nor are their owners advertising-minded. Space-buying is light. Then comes the fact that although they are changing their minds a bit, national advertisers have been unaware of or indifferent to the Negro press and its immediate potentialities.

Advertising volume therefore still is low in Negro publications. Much of the copy is about such items as hair straighteners, skin dyes, lodestones, magic rings, love potions, and innumerable patent medicines. Such "sucker" advertising is heavier in the small publications, for those that have risen to big circulation realms have a market for Seagrams, Philip Morris, Carnation Milk, and several other national accounts. White readers who see these familiar trade names in the ads for the first time, incidentally, are not struck so much by their presence as by the color of the models' faces. Colgate's comic strip photo technique does have a new look with Negro characters. Side-by-side with these big-time ads, however, are some of the Lighter-Skin-for-You displays.

Certain publishers have publicly lamented the necessity for accepting the "sucker" advertising. A minority has been crusading against it for years. But production costs have kited so much that revenue from one of the oldest types of advertising extant cannot be spurned easily.

Roi Ottley, the Negro author and journalist, sees an advantage in this lack of general advertising. He believes it often permits Negro papers to speak out boldly and freely on racial and social questions. Bold they are, if not completely free. *Color* candidly classifies an article on "America's Most Beautiful Negro Woman" under a regular department, Sex. Use of cheesecake pictures is matched only by the white man's girly-girly books. Two or three streamer lines at a time are common with newspapers; often one is printed in red ink or at least in 96 point type. Among the eye-stoppers used by the tabloid New York *Age* are a front page consisting of two top streamer lines in red, the price in red, another two-line streamer, in black, a smear of red known technically as a reverse plate (one said "The Real Sex Menace—Candid! Truthful! Uncensored!" with the words "Sex Menace" dripping bloodily in the typographical fashion of *Weird Tales*) and still another two-line banner.

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ALL THESE front-page hysterics, as well as the come-on advertising copy, hardly live up to the generally endorsed "Credo for the Negro Press." Among its clauses are: "I will knowingly print nothing with malice nor permit the exploitation of my columns by self-seekers and narrow special interests. I shall mold public opinion in the interest of all things constructive . . ." But Negro journalists can cite, in defense if not justification, the frequent disregard of the Canons of Journalism approved years ago by the white American Society of Newspaper Editors.

A section of the Credo most publications regard somewhat more faithfully reads: "I shall be a crusader and an advocate, a mirror and a record, a herald and a spotlight, and I shall not falter." The editors hammer away, with varying degrees of emphasis, at racial discrimination. It may be with the sobriety of *Negro Digest* ("Who Wants to be White?", an article by white contributing editor Milton Mayer) or with the excited front page three-line streamer of the New York *Amsterdam News* ("Bias Rule in U. S. Army Blasted by Rep. Javits.")

Another crusade is the aim to tell of Negro leadership. The press bulges with picture stories, feature articles, and special interviews about successful band maestros, business men, singers, dancers, home makers, and magicians.

No press, consequently, is more race conscious than that of the Negro. Sometimes, as a matter of fact, it calls itself "the race press,." Seeking to avoid the two terms over which the Negro people cannot agree—*Negro* and *colored*—some editors find *race* a happy solution. The limits to which this sensitiveness about labels can go was illustrated by a letter in *Ebony* in which the writer scolded the magazine for using ***niggardly***.

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Horace Cayton, columnist for the Pittsburgh *Courier,* defends all these crusades as socially useful because they serve as a safety valve. "The indignities and injustices," he wrote in his paper one week, "which Negroes suffer in this country have stirred up deep resentment and airing them in the press furnishes a sort of catharsis for people who can take no other action."

Consistency may not be a virtue, but the struggle of Negro leaders to rid the white press of stories that over-emphasize Negro crime would be easier if the Negro press itself were not equally guilty. Saying what white editors have repeated for years—"Well, we have to sell papers, don't we?"—the Negro editor often allows his front page to play up Negro misdoings as sensationally as any white sheet: Samples: "Christmas Night Murder; Tombstone Maker Held in Wife's Gory Death" appeared over an out-of-town story on the Baltimore *Afro-American's* first page. With one exception, all prominent stories on the front page of the Philadelphia *Tribune* one week were about crimes committed by Negroes, and included a two-column picture of an alleged murderess.

★

BEYOND the overwhelming presence of all this propaganda and crime material the Negro press concentrates on sports, society, clubs, fashions, amusements, and personalities. Its more affluent members can teach the white press a lesson about generous use of photographs. News writing quality is rising steadily both in locally produced copy and in that received from syndicates. Naturally the Negro press makes much of stories ignored by the white papers, except where the natural conservatism lines it up with the white publishers, as in the instance of racial disturbances. White newcomers to the Negro papers see almost nothing they have ever read before.

While the majority of papers still are printed on patched and worn presses, with too few type faces and those often in bad condition, with poorly-made engravings, and on low quality paper, physical conditions are in general improved. The new situation stems, not only from some new plants, but also from greater use of news-gathering agencies intended for the Negro press and the encouragement being given to proper educational preparation and working conditions for Negro journalists.

The Negro press has a chance for survival only as part of the general press. It can survive the subsiding of racial conflict and the amalgamation, socially if not physically, of the Negro with other groups by taking an interest in the problems of all peoples and moving gradually away from an obsession only with those of the Negro himself.

FROM GERMANY

Elisabeth Langgaesser

EVEN in the atmosphere of nervous tension prevailing today in Germany, the death of an almost esoteric writer, Elisabeth Langgaesser, has registered a distinct shock here. The news of this death will probably mean nothing to most Americans. For although in Germany Miss Langgaesser was the most discussed and debated personality among the new German writers, her poems, novels and short stories are almost unknown abroad. Her works, not easy for Germans to read, are difficult to translate, as is often the case with the writings of those who are most typical of the literature of their country.

Miss Langgaesser's death at the age of 51 is a tragic loss, since she belonged to that group of authors of the middle generation already thinned out by death, emigration or submission to Nazism. She was one of the few Catholic authors with literary rank in this small group—together with Werner Bergengruen and Stefan Andres (both living abroad now too).

The scattering of this generation has often been pointed out as one of the most serious problems in politics and in cultural life. In literature, there is a chasm between the older and younger writers. The older writers either escape from the problems of today or, if they deal with them, they do so in traditional forms that are not suitable for expressing modern experiences. The very young, like Borchert, have not yet succeeded in finding lasting forms for their desperate cries of bitterness and disillusion—even their language is a faded replica of the expressionism of the twenties. Of the middle group, grown up in European traditions and able to express these traditions according to their own fashion, Miss Langgaesser was the one who was most conscious of the task of her generation.

★

SHE tried to find new forms for the novel. She abstained from neo-expressionistic experiments as far as language was concerned, and she gave up the psychological novel with all its belongings: a central hero, a plot and the continual flow of time. Nor did she build up a mosaic in the style of the early Dos Passos. Instead, she wanted, in her novel, *The Inextinguishable Seal,* to make us conscious of the powers existing outside time and space: the efficacy and meaning of baptismal grace for the protagonist of the story, the Jewish convert Lazarus Belfontaine. His destiny is bound to that of other people of present and past times, worldly people and holy men and women, like Benedict Labré and Thérèse of Lisieux; sinning with him and praying for him, they take part in his eventual salvation.

Then too, the historical errors of Germany and France are woven into the texture of Belfontaine's story. The

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work is rather a drama, a *theatrum mundi,* more than it is a novel; by various artistic means, the author emphasizes that she wants to describe the *reality* of the "seal," not its psychological effects.

This book received both admiration and censure—its Christian purpose, as well as its revolutionary form, were the targets of sharp discussion. However Elisabeth Langgaesser had become the outstanding figure among Catholic writers. But as a Catholic writer, she was isolated in Germany from the beginning. In France, there would have been kinsmen for her like Georges Bernanos and Julian Green who, like her, left the traditional ways of religious literature.

Though Catholic and non-Catholic critics alike acknowledged a deep faith in her keen descriptions of evil, many could not suppress the suspicion that these fervent and vivid depictions of the powers of growth and decay were done for their own sake. To a public nourished on romanticism in the field of emotions, authors who praised noble sentiments in a vague way seemed much more "Christian." Elisabeth Langgaesser herself saw the foundation of her art in the liturgical movement of Maria Laach and Beuron.

★

IN A LITERARY way, the effect of her novel in Germany may be compared with that of James Joyce's *Ulysses.* The groping about for new forms in fiction and poetry was common to many German writers, of course, but only in the work of Miss Langgaesser was there a new constructive idea. (The works of German emigrants that might have given new life to literature were either little known, such as Hermann Broch's *Death of Virgil,* or else they aroused political resentment, as did Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus.*) Whether or not her theories on the new form of the novel are eventually accepted, they did at least stimulate the younger generation.

Her life was as typical of the German situation today as her work was. After suffering persecution from the Nazis—she was of half-Jewish descent—she and her family had to live through the conquest of Berlin. Though the Russians tried to win intellectuals of her caliber, the Germans they sought preferred to emigrate to the West. Officials of all kinds promised to help the Langgaessers, but actually the only refuge they could find were some rooms of the most primitive sort in a small village of the Palatinate.

While in the Eastern zone of Germany, every scribbler was helped by the Soviet authorities, in the West even authors of international renown were left to economic hardship and red tape—Elisabeth Langgaesser was not even able to get a visa to go to Sweden to see her daughter. Only the help of American friends enabled her to survive these first post-war years. Finally, after completing her new novel (which sets forth a kind of panorama of the great heresies of our time) she died after a short illness—still a young and charming woman whose vitality had seemed inexhaustible to her friends.

CLARA MENCK.

Communications

The Vigilantes

New York, N. Y.

TO THE EDITORS: Mobs are, and always have been, a part of the history of every nation. The Vigilante is distinctly American. He is one of our least prepossessing characteristics. He never dies; he assumes new forms. In his newst form he is dangerous because of the respectable and protective coloration of his appeal and conduct. Hidden is even the otherwise naked pragmatic and economic motivation of his conduct. Yet our newest Vigilante has ruined the artistic and money making career of the television actress, Jean Muir. I think his action in this instance a reckless, arrogant, and contemptible thing.

The moving spirit of this Vigilante outfit is Theodore Kirkpatrick, an editor of the expensive *Counter Attack* which published *Red Channels,* a book of listings of alleged Communists and subversives. It is in this book that Miss Muir's name appears, and it is on that basis *alone* that planned and sudden protest was lodged against her. Nothing against Miss Muir has been proved; in fact the twenty who protested to WNBT and to her sponsor, General Foods, made no specific charge other than that her name had been listed in *Red Channels.*

This is a purge, run by private detectives in the name of democracy. It is an admitted purge, and I'm against it.

Mr. Kirkpatrick has announced that none of the people listed is free from attack unless he demonstrates affirmatively how he had broken with CP front groups. And such denial and demonstration must be accompanied by positive support or work on behalf of "pro-American" organizations. Further he may absolve himself by public testimony as to how he was duped, supposing that he had been. No matter how wronged, the burden is on him or her.

There is no specified charge, no trial, no assumption of two sides, no chance to speak, to reply, to rebut; there is only this annulment of artistic and economic life, this swift obliteration.

I submit that this is tyranny, economic and social tyranny. I submit that this is a gross arrogation of godlike power in the hands of a snooping and domineering private group. I submit that this is a violation of decency and right, flowing from a highly intoxicated sense of power. I submit that this is a misconstruction, indeed, a perversion of democracy; a form of blackmail, a vertiginous exercise in terrorism.

I hope that the advertising agencies on Madison Avenue, the sponsors, the radio and television people gather their strength and courage and say to this dubious outfit: "publish and protest, and be damned."

FRANCIS DOWNING.

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The Screen

ROSE IS A ROSE IS A ROSE

"*THE BLACK ROSE*" is typical of so many Hollywood movies. Expensively and handsomely photographed in England and Africa, it has a good cast led by Tyrone Power and Orson Welles and it was based on an interesting historical novel by Thomas B. Costain; in fact it has many ingredients that should make for an exciting adventure movie. But the finished product is rather flat in spite of all the goodness that went into it. Perhaps the film's makers were overawed by the thirteenth century and the beautiful sets and costumes at their disposal. Or perhaps scriptwriter Talbot Jennings got swamped in the plethora of material offered by the Costain book. In any case the characters seldom come to life; and the audience has to get most of its thrill out of the Technicolor glories of old English castles, early Chinese inventions and a few very tense escape episodes.

That the plot is not always easy to follow is, I suspect, due to the script and to film cutters who tried to shorten an overlong movie. It mainly concerns two Saxons (Power as an Oxford graduate and Jack Hawkins as his less literate but more visionary friend) who escape from England, which was conquered some 200 years previously by the Normans. They set out for Cathay, join a caravan led by a cruel, vicious Mongolian general (Welles), come to the aid of a girl (played by a cute new French trick named Cecile Aubry), and finally land in China where they are mistaken for gods. I think the film should have made much more of the wonderful inventions that the boys see for the first time: a compass, printing, gunpowder; but I must say the script does try to cover the possibilities of the last of these three when Tyrone sees the powder as a means for conquering the world and his friend deplores it as being so destructive. If you like rambling adventure, "The Black Rose" won't exactly bore you; but it is too bad that all this extravagant film making couldn't have added up to more than just another movie is a movie.

★

AS IS SO OFTEN the case a little, unpretentious film will succeed as lively cinema where some of the bigger stuff flounders. If you get a chance to see "*Mystery Street,*" which is playing in the neighborhood houses now, don't miss it. Without big-name stars or a high budget, it manages to hold your interest from beginning to end as it shows how a murder mystery is solved by Boston police and some Harvard professors. Step by step you follow the reconstruction of the crime and its solution, which starts from very vague bits of evidence. Ricardo Montalban plays the detective; and Bruce Bennett is the knowing prof who gives more than ordinary assistance. Further suspense is added when a young man (Marshall Thompson) is wrongly suspected, and his wife (Sally Forrest) suffers needlessly. Some good comic touches are handled by Elsa Lanchester as a greedy landlady. "Mystery Street" won't make movie history, but it's good entertainment.

★

IF YOU can accept the major premise in "*The Sleeping City,*" that New York's Bellevue Hospital would allow a detective to pose as an interne and actually do doctoring on his rounds, then you'll find a lot of excitement in this movie. I was rather appalled at this idea, especially when Richard Conte, as the detective-interne, really worked on patients. He's in the hospital to track down suspects in connection with several murders that take place there; and we soon learn that dope is at the bottom of the riddle. There are several quite thrilling chase scenes, and since practically the whole movie was filmed at Bellevue the picture has a lively air of authenticity. Next time you're sent to a hospital, however, you'd better look under your interne's white jacket to see if he's wearing a police badge. If he is, don't let him give you even an insulin injection.

★

THERE are times when a documentary film is much more exciting than even the best of mystery thrillers, and I recommend "*Secrets of Nature,*" a documentary made in Russia as an example. This film, which has an English narration, is one of those cinematic wonders that really defy classification. Let's just call it a nature picture. Part I tells the biography of a stickleback, and shows the male fish building a nest, leading the female into it to lay her eggs, fertilizing the eggs, guarding them and then guarding the young fish. The suspense when this fish gets rid of hungry prowlers is much greater than anything in "The Black Rose."

Part II deals with an experiment at the zoo where several kinds of animals were thrown together at a very early age and learned to grow up on friendly terms. This part of the movie follows the obvious Soviet propaganda line in the commentary, but its visuals are as cute as the deuce.

Part III needs a stronger stomach than mine to follow it closely. It's called "Duel to the Death" and tells a gory story of survival on the desert. Strong stuff.

Part IV tells the story of a female stork whose wing is broken and who is tended by her mate. Come winter, a farmer takes in the pair and protects them until spring when he constructs a platform for their nest. The shots of the storks building their nest, laying and hatching their four eggs, feeding their young and teaching them how to fly are as fascinating as anything the movies ever show. "Secrets of Nature" is not as finished or polished as Disney's "Beaver Valley," but it is even more revealing than that fine short. Don't miss it. I'm sure your kids will be able to take the bloody fights in the desert sequence even if you can't.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Of Note

Little Mags

FOR the first issue of *The Catacomb* (114 Wigmore Street, London, W. 1), a literary quarterly edited by Rob Lyle and Roy Campbell, T. S. Eliot wrote a letter to the editors:

> You have asked me to contribute a message to *The Catacomb,* and because I wish well to *The Catacomb* and should like it to survive and flourish, I write this letter. But I do not like the solemn word 'message,' because it seems to imply either that one thinks one has something very important to say, or that anything signed by oneself is important enough to be a message. Furthermore, I cannot regard a 'message' from myself as a very good omen. I am often asked to support a candidate for some scholarship or other preferment; and although my support continues to be sought, I have been impressed by its inefficacy. And for a review or magazine, the endorsement of the editor of a review which panted for seventeen years with the aid of artificial respiration, can do little to improve the credit of the document endorsed.
>
> A serious review can only survive by building up a list of regular subscribers. When you find, after two or three years, how many subscribers you can count upon—allowing for some losses and gains every year—out of the total population of Britain, you can try to cut your cloth accordingly. Then you are in a better position to appeal to the people —there are not very many—who may be willing to help; for it is easier to aim at a definite amount of backing to keep things going, than to ask for vague amounts towards an indefinite and probably chimerical future. You will never keep a serious review going without artificial respiration; and the sooner you can tell people just how much oxygen is needed to keep the heart beating, the better.
>
> *The Criterion* had, in its palmiest days, some 800 subscriptions. Beyond the libraries and colleges in Japan, India, Egypt, South America and the United States, and some at home, and the unknown individual subscribers in unknown places, it was surprising to find how few names on the list were those of people whose names were known to the editor. I suppose that today the situation is still more difficult. Instead of supporting literature by buying new books and subscribing to worthy periodicals, an increasing number of people feel that the Arts Council, or some such body, ought to do something about it. I have even heard it suggested, as a palliative of the deplorable fact that people will not buy new books of verse by young poets, that the Arts Council should subsidize publishers —to produce more of the unsalable commodity.
>
> *The Catacomb* is not altogether suited to the temper of the present time. For some years literature was involved with a silly kind of political enthusiasm. Less is heard about that now; in fact I think it is generally the opinion that the less said about politics the better, and that a literary review should disclose no convictions. Your views appear to me independent; but I am sure that *The Catacomb* would be more acceptable to the patron of art and letters (who won't subscribe in any case, however) if it discreetly avoided having any views at all.
>
> After this, I can do no other than enclose my subscription.

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Interracial Marriage

MORAL Problems of Interracial Marriage is the title of a doctoral dissertation written by the Reverend Joseph F. Doherty and published by the Catholic University of America Press (Washington, D.C.). The following are Father Doherty's conclusions in the chapter "Interracial Marriage in the Light of Catholic Morality."

> Although interracial marriages have certain undesirable features, especially where they involve a white person in this country at the present time, nevertheless the fact that the Church will allow this type of marriage to her qualified subjects in-

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dicates her great respect for the exercise of natural rights and her appreciation of the exalted worth of the benefits of marriage to the individual and to society. For this reason, it would be somewhat incautious to brand interracial marriage in general as something morally reproachable. There is little in the official documents of the Catholic Church bearing on interracial marriage, but where there is even an indirect reference the Church does not seem to indicate any displeasure.

The right to marry interracially and the individual of one's choice is a corollary of the natural right to marry in general. Since the exercise of natural rights is highly beneficial in itself, the same beneficial nature of exercising the right to marry interracially demands recognition. Collectively taken, the teaching of individual Catholic writers indicates that the entrance upon an interracial marriage is a morally good act despite certain undesirable circumstances that might accompany it.

These conclusions presume that the marriages in question have been entered upon in accordance with the dictates of Christian prudence. This prudence is based upon the principles of Christian faith and refers all things to the supernatural end of man, namely, God as He is known and loved on earth and as He is possessed in heaven. Christian prudence is not only concerned with man's destiny here on earth but also with his eternal destiny. In entering upon an interracial marriage when all the requirements of Christian prudence are fulfilled the individuals concerned act without reproach. In this evaluation it was recognized that there are advantages and benefits of sacramental and even natural marriage, the desire of which constitutes a motive of such a high order as to transcend other considerations of a lower order of importance militating against entrance upon an interracial marriage. These benefits involve a relationship to the ultimate end of man and as such they are of a higher order than mere temporal considerations.

The various objections which may be placed against interracial marriages, some of which are more or less grave, do not seem to be of sufficient weight in light of the principle of double effect to forbid interracial marriage when the parties themselves desire the exalted benefits of marriage and in their prudent judgment choose this particular type of marriage to secure them. Hence, even human love, considered as the ordinary way a person expresses his preference for a marriage partner and as the prelude to great natural and supernatural benefits seems to be sufficient reason to contract such a marriage. Finally, it is to be observed that since the force of moral and social objections to these marriages varies so much with local and personal circumstances, Christian prudence having been observed, the charge of indiscretion cannot be leveled against them as a general rule.

A Drop or Two of Treason

By PAUL V. FARRELL

GENEALOGY aside, isolating peoples or national attitudes in terms of generations—set apart from those before and after—is a convenient and dramatic, but untrustworthy approach to history. It oversimplifies the complexities of human relationships.

Where, for example, would the cataloguers of mankind put those of us who are still short of a relatively tender twoscore years? It's somewhat more than flippancy to point out that in a brief span we can claim membership in several generations and still be material for one or two equally significant ones yet to develop. Bouts with bathtub gin qualified us for the last stages of the Lost Generation; collaboration for a brave new world with haters of fascism, including Communists, for the Generation of the New Deal and the Common Man; a stint in the services for the Generation of Liberators; stuffy nights in roach-ridden one-room apartments for the Postwar or Cynical Generation.

Yet there are few who would admit that our thought and action in any of those periods hang suspended in time, cut out of the continuity of our lives. Most of us, despite the accidents of cultural and political movements, like to feel that some basic purpose, and some basic principles, however obscure, motivate and guide us as the different eras in which we live are woven one into the other. That is why, on the one hand, the bromide "our generation has made a mess of things, and it's up to you younger people to straighten them out" seems so much the excuse of a lazy, irresponsible mind. That is why, on the other, we should be able to recognize and admit our past mistakes in ignoring one tyranny to fight another, while we go on now to apply the same moral principles that originally moved us, to judge the newer tyranny.

★

IN *A Generation on Trial* (*Knopf,* $3.50) Alistair Cooke, Chief U. S. correspondent for *The Manchester Guardian,* has produced a superbly written account of the celebrated trials of *United States of America v. Alger Hiss,* with the defendant cast as a scapegoat of a "generation"—the young and idealistic liberals and intellectuals of the thirties. Something short of a hero, he is portrayed as the principal figure in a tragedy *manqué,* as one chosen by a nation "convulsed with fear and hatred of the Soviet Union" in 1948 to prove that the Roosevelt administration and its supporters had be-

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trayed us, or blunderingly led us, to our present plight.

Although the testimony at the two trials covers the major part of the book, Hiss himself emerges as secondary in importance in this skillfully reported drama of our times. Thwarted by hard factual rocks (the famous Woodstock typewriter and the stolen documents), Cooke passes by the question of Hiss' guilt (or motives) as a matter of conjecture (at the end of 341 pages he concludes "he had not stolen them, or could not, or would not say he had") to press home the theme that the verdict of the trial was a betrayal of the generation, and therefore of liberalism. What it did, he says, "was to limit by intimidation what no Western society can safely limit: the curiosity and idealism of its young . . . and helped therefore to usher in a period when a high premium would be put on the chameleon and the politically neutral slob."

In reaching this conclusion, Cooke gives highly articulate expression to the tendency of the neither-nor school of the Left to romanticize and crystallize the thirties as a golden age of purest liberalism and social philosophy, standing alone and detached in tragic glory, above the malignant onslaughts of the dark forces of reaction that rule our life today. The job is done with urbanity, much wit, sweet reasonableness, and convincing protestations of objectivity.

In creating this awesome picture, which should be at least faintly astonishing to all but the most doctrinaire liberals, Cooke shows great selectivity in the choice and interpretation of the facts we either already knew or else learned during the past two decades. The difference between a public espousal (by Winston Churchill) of alliance with Russia because of her opposition to fascism, and the secret transmission of documents to a foreign power (as Hiss was "supposed" to have done) in violation of an oath is blurred over as inconsequential. The cruel logic of the Soviet dynamism is ignored, and we are left with the impression that the friendly Russia of the thirties was an altogether different animal from the aggressor of the forties.

The consistent nature of the peril, confirmed not only by the revelations of the disenchanted, but by such events as the Canadian spy trials and the garrotting of social democracy — and social democrats — in one European country after another, lay undisclosed, if Cooke is right, until Klaus Fuchs' activities were brought to light. "After Fuchs we knew better," he cries with triumphant innocence. Even though there was widespread belief in Hiss' innocence among all types of people at the start, and the President called the whole investigation a "red herring," Cooke would have us believe that such sentiments were slight and practically engulfed by a Hearstian wave of hatred and distrust.

★

BECAUSE this is indirectly (the weight of the evidence must make it so) the "pro-Hiss" book of the whole spectacular and paradoxical affair, it must inevitably be compared with the frankly "pro-Chambers" *Seeds of Treason*. Since a good deal of the material concerning both the trials and the periods with which they dealt is a matter of record, the differences are chiefly those of emphasis and of interpretation.

But differences also creep in where it is hard to separate fact and opinion. In assessing the testimony of the psychiatrist and the psychologist for the defense, Cooke pictures them as highly skilled professional men, the victims of philistinic badgering by a prosecutor playing up the common man of the jury, who, "ninety-four years after the birth of Freud, would still rather steer clear of the mysteries of emotional health." They are treated somewhat less gently in *Seeds of Treason,* where we are told (as we are not in Mr. Cooke's book) how Judge Goddard warned Dr. Singer that he was a witness, not an advocate, and how Mr. Murphy, the prosecutor, tripped up Dr. Murray, showing that he had lied to the court, and that he had started his investigations already convinced of his diagnosis of Chambers. In one book Hiss is called "not a policy maker, only a devoted and able State Department officer below the first rank." This is in contrast to the *Seeds of Treason* picture of him as Stettinius' aide, holding strategically important positions in the negotiations of the Yalta Conference, and one of the group of four—the other three were Roosevelt, Stalin, and an interpreter—who concluded the agreement giving Russian three votes to America's one in the UN.

★

IN A WAY this is a baffling book, full of ambiguities, unspoken implications, and tragic mystery of the kind hinted at by Alger Hiss and his defense counsel in their final remarks before the sentencing. And it is all written with apparently great sensitiveness and feeling —except for those few passages of almost evangelistic ferocity Cooke reserves for the "renegades . . . reconstituted patriots . . . nauseating crew of heretics . . . who survived their Russian baptism of the twenties and thirties and are now keen for anything that someone will dignify by calling the American Way." That passage, perhaps, is more revealing than Cooke intended it to be.

The Hiss Case encompasses tragedies within tragedies, personal, philosophical, and international, as each day's new headlines testify. It takes a strong mind and heart to try to see them clearly, in as true a perspective as we can hope for. The struggle for the human soul is and always has been a real one, and we cannot change our weapons or our standards of battle from generation to generation. "National life," says Rebecca West in her brilliant *The Meaning of Treason,* "itself must frequently exasperate [a man], because it is the medium in which he is expressing himself, and every craftsman or artist is repelled by the resistance of his medium to his will. All men should have a drop or two of treason in their veins, if the nations are not to go soft like so many sleepy pears."

Does our civilization, shaken free of its old foundations, feel confident that those desirable drops can be kept from growing into a stream simply by the force of purely subjective morality and subjunctive thinking? That way madness lies.

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Books

Across the River and into the Trees. Ernest Hemingway. Scribner's. $3.

IT IS A LONG time since we have had a new novel from Hemingway. A long time: ten years. Now his *Across the River and into the Trees* has appeared. In a highly competent and business-like way he spins out the interesting story of the last hours and death of a professional soldier, an American colonel who goes to Venice to die. The well-known elements of the Hemingway novel — war experiences, violence, sex, nostalgic reminiscences—all are here again. There is no new development in Hemingway's art, there are no unexpected twists. Yet something has changed, and the hand which in the past so deftly imparted form to this matter now shows signs of indecision.

Colonel Richard Cantwell, Col., Infantry, returns to the region in Italy, the environs of Venice, where he fought as an American lieutenant with Italian troops in the first world war. Now fifty years old and bitter, he is a willing expatriate, dreaming of burial in some green field in the ground on which he fought and killed. But it is not the memory-intertwined Venice alone which attracts him, but a young girl, a nineteen-year old countess, whom he wishes to see and make love to. That done, he leaves her, and a few hours later dies.

In the few hours of the story, Venice remains a background, grey, poor, with blotches of nouveaux-riches, knowingly tired and sad. The minor characters are all neatly drawn, well placed as to reflect the different facets of the hero's personality. The first indication of a faltering in Hemingway's creative skill comes in the characterization of the heroine. The young girl with long beautiful hair who wears tight black sweaters and loves to hold the broken, scarred hand of the Colonel is not real. And although Hemingway has had difficulties before in creating feminine characters, it is not for the same reasons that he has failed in this instance. In this case he has given to the heroine a symbolic function which deprives her of an autonomous artistic value.

Just what the symbolism of the heroine may be is indicated in the character of the hero. The Colonel's disillusionment has left him with but one value. He has no political convictions for he knows politicians. No respect for culture for he has seen it the maidservant of the strong and arrogant. No sense of patriotism for he knows that that too can be a racket. And since all values, even love, are daily soiled by men, better not to believe in them at all. Better to join a club, do what you are assigned, and die without pretensions. But if one meets a healthy, uncomplex, wholesome girl, then life acquires meaning. She in her animal integrity, untroubled by the perplexity of moral problems, is the indictment of all values touched by corruption. She is not a person, but the symbol of beautiful, amoral bliss: the one value left to the Colonel.

Has Hemingway set out, then, to use characters as symbols and to write a sort of novel of ideas? Not at all. At one point, however, he may have felt a temptation to give to the novel a number of overtones of meaning.

The girl obviously would not be meaningful and necessary to the Colonel were he not, like all of Hemingway's heroes, a poet. But poetry too is suspect. And the Colonel tries to cheat the poet in him, to hide behind wisecracks and banalities. At this point Hemingway loses control over his character. For the Colonel often speaks a phony hybrid language, compound of bathos and elegy, which, far from revealing interior struggle, suggests the alternate placing of cards with directions in front of the speaker: now speak tender and gentle . . . now speak brutal and cold . . . now, etc.

The hero does not come off.

The rest is standard Hemingway. Because of the superb war reminiscences, we can overlook the pose of the healthy barbarian, the femme fatale, the assiduous cult of the Anglo-Saxon phrases. When Hemingway writes "military" he is without peer.

The juxtaposition of the sordid and the elegiac, which is the genius of Hemingway, is the guiding spirit of this work. Yet here he has created a central character whose complexity has gone past his reach. The novel merits respect, not enthusiasm.

SERGE HUGHES.

Adolphe and the Red Note-Book. Benjamin Constant. Pantheon. $1.25.
Dominique. Eugène Fromentin. Chanticleer. $2.
The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge. Rainer Maria Rilke. Norton. $3.50.

THE end of World War II was the signal for a wholesale *recherche du temps perdu* within our threatened Western culture. Never since the Renaissance has there been such a ransacking of attics in literature and the arts—the purpose being, not to make a bonfire of accumulated junk, but to restore to the principal rooms some noble furniture which had long been regarded as outmoded. The nineteenth century, in particular, has been rediscovered and reassessed with astonishing speed and vigor. Countless hasty judgments made in the early part of our century have been stood on their heads with almost equal haste. Along with the rediscoveries go some actual new discoveries.

Adolphe, of course, is no newcomer, having been rediscovered for readers of English at least four times in the past fifty years. Completed in 1807, published in 1816, it is a book for the twentieth century even more than for the nineteenth. Chateaubriand's René and Goethe's Werther only hint at the modern neurotic personality; Adolphe *is* it. Where the heroes and heroines of Corneille and Racine, torn between Passion and Duty, chose one or the other and gloried in the tragic conse-

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quences of their choice—where the villain and villainess of *Les liaisons dangereuses* gloried equally in their contempt for both—Adolphe manages to waver indefinitely between the two promptings without finally satisfying the demands of either. His is the divided mind characteristic of the neurotic, who can be fully aware, as Adolphe is, of the presence of his conflict, even though its origins may be buried deep within the unconscious.

Adolphe, a young man with considerable talent and a reasonable share of ambition, begins a love affair with the long-time mistress of a friend—a woman some years older than himself. At first he is motivated solely by vanity, which her resistance piques more and more; then she gives herself to him and becomes possessive; "she no longer represented a goal: she had become a bond." His love for her is soon exhausted, but not his pity. He would be happy to leave her, but instead she leaves her protector; by this sacrifice, which he did not want, she puts him more in her debt than ever.

Meanwhile Adolphe's father is constantly urging him to break this dishonorable tie and embark on a career. Adolphe would like to, but has not the heart. And so the whole messy business drags on for years. He is cruel enough to neglect her and to quarrel with her, but not to desert her. He is kind enough to pity her and stay with her, but not to love her. Ultimately she discovers the full extent of his (mental) treachery to her and dies of a broken heart. Still Adolphe is not satisfied. "How heavily this liberty weighed upon me which I had so often regretted!" In 85 pages we have the whole pathology of love. The lesson of *Adolphe* applies not only to unconsecrated unions, but to the experience of many couples who have misunderstood the nature of Christian marriage. See Scott Fitzgerald *passim*.

DOMINIQUE (1863) might be described as a Victorian or Second Empire emasculation of *Adolphe*. Perhaps, too, it owes much to Gérard de Nerval's *Sylvie*—a little masterpiece. Gide's *Strait Is the Gate* and Alain-Fournier's *Le grand Meaulnes* are later books in the same tradition.

Dominique too is a neurotic. By the time he comes to tell his story, he has gotten on some sort of terms with life, but only to the extent that he has withdrawn from Parisian society, and his political and literary ambitions, to live on his country estate. Still, he is a model landowner, a contented husband and a proud, if anxious, father. It was in his younger days that his divided mind gave him most suffering, though he still possesses "the cruel gift of the power to look on at one's own life as if it were a play staged by someone else." (Adolphe speaks of "that part of us which is observing the other.")

At seventeen Dominique fell in love with Madeleine, who was eighteen. He was too shy, too idealistic, too masochistic to tell her that he loved her. Not long afterward she married a thirty-five-year-old count. Dominique's duty was clear, even to himself. He must keep away from her, but this he lacked the strength to do. Failing that, he must never let her know of his love. Again his weakness betrayed him, and he then persuaded Madeleine to allow him to visit her regularly in the hope of curing himself. Very naturally, the "cure" only aggravated the disease.

When he had tortured Madeleine in this way for a long time, she fell in love with him, admitted as much, and forbade him to see her any more. This final command he had no difficulty in obeying, perhaps because unconsciously he feared consummation. In any case, disillusionment would have been bound to follow. He retired to his estate and ultimately found the sort of contentment I have already described.

Dominique's best friend says to him ". . . you have just strength enough to skirt round difficulties without coming to grief, and weakness enough to get an exquisite thrill from danger." This is perhaps all that need be said. It is the women in *Dominique* and *Adolphe* who alone play for keeps. The "heroes" stake only their possible future careers, in which they do not even believe. Dominique has the grace to call himself a "distinguished mediocrity." Adolphe is not sure that he is even that.

NO ONE understood the urge to self-immolation of the great women lovers better than Rilke. "They hurl themselves after him they have lost, but even with their first steps they overtake him, and before them is only God." He thinks of Sappho ". . . when in the darkness of embracing she delved not for satisfaction but for longing." Over and over again he returns to this theme in *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910). Malte is an imaginary Danish poet whose childhood and feudal Danish ancestors are often evoked. His *Notebooks* do not tell a connected story, and love in its more banal meanings is never a theme; death and the fear of death are his most frequent topics for meditation. Rilke apparently never intended to give the work any semblance of completeness—it was to be the collected fragments of one who had died too young to achieve any finished work.

None the less, *The Notebooks* do possess a certain unity of tone and viewpoint. Everything in life is for Brigge a mystery—in both the theological and the scientific senses of the word. Experiences, large and small, are often evoked with a vividness that seems born of hyperaesthesia. Even in translation there are words and phrases that rise up from the page clawing for the reader's vitals. "To think that I cannot give up sleeping with the window open. Electric street-cars rage ringing through my room. Automobiles run their way over me. A door slams. Somewhere a window pane falls clattering; I hear its big splinters laugh, its little ones snicker." One could tell that this was the prose of a poet if one had never heard of Rilke.

The book ends with Rilke's interpretation of the Parable of the Prodigal Son as "the legend of him who did not want to be loved." The last words are characteristic: "What did they know of him? He was now terribly difficult to love, and he felt that One alone was able for the task. But He was not yet willing."

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In the end it was Rilke who was not willing, who could not accept God's love even on his deathbed. Perhaps after all he was not much different from Constant, who could not bear to be loved by anyone for very long. But at least Malte and Adolphe and their creators have one great virtue in common. However undisciplined their emotions, their perceptions are always under perfect control. They may feel like Romantics, but they record their feelings like Classics.

VIVIAN MERCIER.

Journey To The Missouri. Toshikazu Kase. Yale. $4.

THIS is the first book in English which tells us that Pearl Harbor and all the related aggressive scheme of the Japanese government "did not actually mean" what these steps "seemed to mean." It belongs to the category of the volumes which have appeared after every recent war and have exhorted us to remember that not every German, Italian, Spaniard, and so on, was supporting the war steps, and hence, by implication, that the German, Italian, Spanish and other people cannot be held responsible for the aggression.

From that point of view, the volume is quite boresome. In fact, the reviewer would like to state that the most valuable part of the publication are the seven pages provided as a "foreword" by the editor, Professor David Nelson Rowe, who has most ably summarized Kase's the argument within the general framework of the events of World War II.

Of interest is the fact that the author treats President Roosevelt "in an entirely favorable light," although—as Rowe points out—"it now becomes even more difficult than before to understand the heavy price paid to Stalin at Yalta to bring the USSR into a war which, as this book shows, was already won by us and lost by the Japanese at the time of the Yalta meeting. . . . In view of this fact, and others presented in this book, the diplomacy of Yalta can be explained only as based upon a monumental failure of American political and military intelligence on wartime Japan."

JOSEPH S. ROUCEK.

The Dark Stranger. Julien Gracq. New Directions. $2.50.

IT IS GENERALLY true that novels published by New Directions are marked by a superiority in knowledge of words and a superiority in knowledge of reality. Usually their books indicate a technique and rhythm with signs of intelligence and feeling and seriousness—qualities which are often missing in the books which appear these days.

This story, translated from the French, has a promising beginning. There are some effective lines of place description and personal reflection. Even before a quote is used the likeness to the close, full style of Mauriac is apparent. But the novel never does get beyond its good beginning. There is a ponderous building up of an at-

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mosphere which cannot account for the effects upon the characters noted in the diary of the writer.

To a summer hotel in Brittany there comes "a dark stranger" who in a short time makes everyone uneasy. It is in this connection that the author fails. The dark stranger demoralizes the people around him by a mysterious air which is never translated by imagery or rhythm or tone. Only two actions appear to account for his unusual influence: the walk along the edge of a high wall and the loss of large sums at roulette. These are paltry incidents in face of the overwhelming, transcendental currents which the stranger's appearance sets in motion and they demonstrate the inadequacy of the frame which the writer used in this book.

GEORGE MILES.

From Versailles to the New Deal. Harold U. Faulkner. Yale. $6.

"CONFORMITY will be the only virtue. And every man who refuses to conform will have to pay the penalty." In 1917, President Wilson thus predicted the attitude of the average American toward his fellow citizens should the country go to war. At the same time, he succinctly characterized the span of the latest volume in the Chronicle of America series. In it, nothing is so striking as the return of the twenties to many of the political, social and economic conditions of Grant's regime. They are, in a way, parallel periods of mental and moral fatigue after "a great crusade." Each has its government malfeasance scandals, suppression of labor, expansion and consolidation of business under benevolent official eyes and its prejudices against minorities who fit better the Statue of Liberty inscription than the "log-cabin" tradition.

The parallel is disconcerting because the seventies reflect untrained native shrewdness while the twenties are mainly the product of educated mediocrity. The conformity which this mediocrity requires is the normalcy of Coolidge, the "safe, solid, and familiar" pattern of government which muddles through, considering any sort of legislative aid to farmer or labor as a complete espousal of socialism. It is "normal" that these souls have a hard lot just as it is "normal" that those who have the money expand their profits by the most expedient means. It is almost as though the farm-labor groups were totally responsible for their plight and therefore must work out their own problems, while business, exhibiting the virtues of thrift and industry, is to be aided in every way to pursue its own ends. In society, the conformity to mediocrity is typified by Babbitt, who loved a party, especially with bathtub gin, and dismissed world affairs with approval of the government's stand—ratification of pacts without understanding the subtleties of international diplomacy.

The era was full of "good times." Many were real; most were superficial. The Chronicle is a verbal picture-book of them with enough lights and shadows for a good study. At first glance, one might almost want to

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return to the time of the pictures, but like every photograph, these stir up a flood of speculation of how and why things were so. None of these questions is answered except by referral to a good biblography where, perhaps, some of the answers to the happiness-sadness normalcy of the adolescent country are to be found.

ELLEN LOGUE.

Flowers on the Grass. Monica Dickens. McGraw-Hill. $3.

I SUPPOSE that there are few types that arouse motherly feelings in young women quite so much as an artistic Bohemian rover who carries his dedication to a life of independence on his sleeve. At any rate that is the effect that Daniel had; his career was one long series of escapes from feminine clutches of varying degrees of attraction.

This device works out rather neatly. Miss Dickens betrays only a minor interest in the man and his numerous tangles with womanly possessiveness. Daniel's rambles give her a chance she relishes to bring her marked talent for satire into play: there are a college in Chelsea, several kinds of lodging houses, a holiday camp for adults, a hyper-progressive girls' school, a wealthy household with an epileptic son, a hospital. These are the things that interest her. The pity she now and then manifests during this rapid succession of brief environmental interludes serves to heighten the general satirical effect.

EDWARD S. SKILLIN.

The Living Soil. E. B. Balfour. Devin-Adair. $4.

IN SUPPORT of the view that a close connection exists between soil fertility and human health, and that fertility of the soil is being adversely affected by the increasing use of chemical fertilizers, E. B. Balfour presents a case which the advocates of other systems of farming cannot discount lightly.

Today, three different systems of farming are in use, being based on three different conceptions of the true nature of nutrition. These are (1) a flow of materials from the soil and back to the soil; (2) supplying chemical nutrients to feed the soil, and (3) the use of manure and other humus-forming materials plus chemical fertilizers. Balfour supports the first.

Feeding the soil with chemical nutrients is rejected as a satisfactory system because it does not supply humus, which, the author holds, is the basis of health. (Humus is a product of decomposition of plant and animal residues. It has been defined as the product of living matter and the source of it.)

In studies of races of people where the only variable was in the national diet extreme differences in health were noted, the best health being found where material from the soil that had grown the food was returned to the soil. When rats were used to try the respective diets

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Chapters of **MISSION TO THE POOREST** by **Father Jacques Loew, O.P.** ($3.00) and **PILGRIMS OF THE NIGHT** by **Msgr. Edward E. Swanstrom** ($2.50) have appeared in *The Commonweal,* so it would be silly for us to describe the books here, but you may like to be reminded of them, and to hear that both are ready.

If you haven't had the September **Trumpet,** which has our whole fall list in it, let us know. If you are on the list, you should have had it by now. If you are not on the list, would you like to be? In either case, write to Lucy MacGill. The **Trumpet** comes free and postpaid.

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of different races of India where extreme differences in physique were noted, the results supported the stand that the diets influenced the physiques. Thus, Balfour believes there is a complete and continuous transference of health from a fertile soil, through plant and/or animal to man, and back to the soil again.

The summary of the far-reaching claims made by many advocates of humus farming shows that if fertility is built up with adequate supplies of humus (either from barn-yard manure or compost) crops do not suffer from diseases and do not require poison sprays to control parasites, that animals fed on these plants develop a high degree of disease resistance, and through such farming can reach a high standard of health.

While Balfour's efforts were "to write for both the specialist and the layman," parts of the book will be grasped by the latter only with difficulty.

C. F. MARLEY.

St. Benedict. T. F. Lindsay. Macmillan. $2.00.

THERE IS something primarily objective about this volume, especially in its early chapters, which present the life of the Father of Western monasticism on the basis of the writings of Saint Gregory and the other few authentic texts. The latter half of the book takes up and gives the author's considered verdict on such controversies as: whether manual labor was intended to be obligatory for every monk; for whom the rule was intended; the best method of meditation. It also cites the penetrating observations of Cardinal Newman and Pius XII.

Mr. Lindsay comes to this conclusion: "There is something fundamental about Benedictinism. . . . Wherever the monks penetrated, they took with them the vital elements of Christian civilization. Their humility and obedience, their submission to authority, their mutual courtesy and affection, their simplicity and silence, their praises of God, their unremitting labors—all these built up a picture of Christian society which was as grand as it was compelling."

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